

**EVENING MEETING  
BOARD WORK SESSION  
AUGUST 20, 1997**

**MINUTES**

The Board met at 6:00 p.m. at The Edison Walthall Hotel, 225 East Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi, on August 20, 1997. Members present included: Yvonne Brown, Sara Fox, Billy Hewes, Henry "Bubba" Hudspeth, John Junkin, Patricia Puckett, William Seal, Hazel Terry, and George Walker. Others present included State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) staff Randall Bradberry, Becky Cade, Deborah Gilbert, Olon Ray, Wayne Stonecypher, Evelyn Webb, and staff attorney Frankie Walton-White.

Mr. Walker called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Ms. Yvonne Brown gave the invocation for the meal. Upon completion of the meal, the business meeting started. First, Wayne Stonecypher followed up on a request by members made in July for information about the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Dr. Stonecypher passed out a packet of information from the Association and briefly described the costs, (\$390 total cost for board per year) and benefits offered should the members choose to join the ACCT. Mr. Billy Hewes made a motion that the Board join the ACCT for one year and at the end of that time review their decision. The motion was seconded by Billy Seal. After discussion, the member decided to postpone voting on the motion that night, but requested that the item be put on the agenda for the Board Meeting in the morning. This allowed members to review the information packets prior to their vote.

Next, Mr. Walker asked the members for input on moving the work of the committee as a whole from Thursday mornings to the Wednesday dinner meetings. Discussion ensued and a commitment was made from staff to include committee meeting materials with the information sent to members for their review the week prior to regular Board meetings. However, due to this decision, there will be no 8:00 a.m. committee meetings. This schedule will be altered, as needed, to accommodate Board visits to colleges. Mr. Walker also asked that the following appointees act as liaisons to the staff for committee work: Mr. Billy Seal with Finance, Ms. Joanna Heidel with Programs, and Ms. Yvonne Brown with EdNet. Each appointee agreed.

Mr. Walker then asked that Hinds Community College and the Board of Trustees action to pay Dr. Clyde Muse's legal fees be put on the agenda for Thursday's Board meeting.

In other matters, Dr. Ray reminded board members of the Retirement Party for Bill Bunch, Bill Box, and Mac McClellan that is scheduled for Tuesday night, August 26, 1997. While this is not an official board function, he wanted to make sure each member knew that they are invited and welcomed to participate.

Dr. Ray also informed members that the hotel had notified staff of their policy change as it relates to offering several choices in the dinner menu. Discussion that followed included pursuing other meeting possibilities. By consensus, members chose to continue meeting on Wednesday nights at the Walthall and asked that staff vary the menu selection slightly each month.

Ms. Joanna Heidel requested that the item pertaining to Hinds Community College Board of Trustees' decision to pay Dr. Muse's legal expenses be discussed tonight. Ms. Heidel shared with members an article in The Clarion Ledger that reported that Hinds Trustees voted to reimburse Dr. Muse for \$25,159 in personal legal fees. Further, the article stated that the Trustees would reimburse the funds unless reimbursement was challenged by the Attorney General or some other authority. Mr. Johnny Junkin spoke up and recused himself from any discussion about this issue stating that he was also a member of the Mississippi Ethics Commission that is currently involved in litigation on this issue. Mr. Walker then provided members with a letter sent to the Board attorney for Hinds Community College from Attorney General Mike Moore (Refer to attached letter). While the Attorney General's response refrained from offering an official opinion on the request, the response did include copies of several official opinions where authorization of public monies for payment of public officials' legal expenses was denied. Use of funds was denied whether the public official was successful or not.

For the benefit of new board members, Dr. Ray was asked to briefly provide an overview of the legal suit that was brought against Dr. Muse. Dr. Ray explained that Dr. Muse was sued for violation of conflict of interest laws for employing his wife at Hinds Community College. The suit requested in excess of \$300,000 in repayment of monies and his resignation from Hinds. The case was dismissed by a Hinds County Circuit Court, but on request of the Mississippi Ethics Commission, the Attorney General has filed an appeal to the State's Supreme Court, which is pending.

Ms. Heidel made a motion that the SBCJC send a resolution to the Board of Trustees at Hinds reflecting the Board's belief that it is not in the best interest of the Hinds' Board or the state to use public funds to pay Dr. Muse's legal expenses. Mr. Hudspeth seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion were: Yvonne Brown, Sara Fox, Billy Hewes, Henry Hudspeth, Patricia Puckett, William Seal, Hazel Terry, and George Walker. Voting against the motion: none. The motion carried. Mr. Johnny Junkin, who also serves on the Mississippi Ethics Commission did not participate in either the discussion or the vote. Ms. Frankie Walton-White, Board attorney, was requested to draft a resolution embodying the Board's concerns for Mr. Walker's signature (Copy on file).

Mr. Hudspeth then brought forth to the members an issue to consider supporting legislation to remove local Superintendents of Education from the Community and Junior College Boards of Trustees. Mr. Hudspeth made a motion that the SBCJC go on record requesting and supporting the introduction of legislation to exclude Superintendents of Education from local Boards. The motion was seconded by Johnny Junkin. Discussion followed and the board voted unanimously in favor of supporting such legislation.

Finally, Dr. Ray passed out a letter he had drafted to be send to Larry Miller, President of EdNet, Inc. and to EdNet Board members about some concerns with EdNet. He asked that Board members review the letter for discussion in the overall meeting the next day.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Hudspeth moved that the meeting be adjourned. Billy Seal seconded the motion and upon unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.